



1st July, 2016 marked as a very sad day for us, when the news of passing away of a dear friend Professor Dr. G. N. Vankhede was received. Born on 17th August, 1951, in Raver (Jalgaon) he obtained his Masters in 1974 and Ph.D. in 1990. He was a great teacher. His study interests varied from Fisheries, Toxicology, Molecular Biology, ecology, wildlife studies, conservation, Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), Immunology and Arachnology. He supervised around 28 students for Ph.D. He has published 14 valuable books; he also contributed around 33 valuable publications. He participated in 4 international and 32 national conferences along with many invited talks and chairing of sessions. He had completed 8 research projects. Dr. Vankhede was a voracious reader and writer and used to send latest updates to his students and colleagues. Over five prestigious awards have been conferred on him.

To broaden the importance of studies on spiders in India, in general, and for upcoming young scientists in particular, Professor Vankhede pioneered to popularise this less investigated field by ways and means, also by organising several hands-on Workshops and Symposia in Amravati and adjoining areas of Maharashtra including Melghat forest ecosystem. He used to highlight the role of spiders in forest ecosystem. He realized that without field work, the concept of studying these interesting predators will not be clear to the new comers in this field of Arachnology. Always in quest for accomplishing and implementing the best, he was the person who collected the vast national and international literature of Arachnida and made it available to all participants during such Workshops/Symposia. With the help of his team, he revised the bibliography on Indian spiders. He also maintained the types and named specimens of spiders.

Professor Vankhede initiated and successfully launched the Indian Society of Arachnology, coupled with an online Indian Journal of Arachnology. Even after his superannuation in 2013, his dedication to his work diversified and extended to different aspects in this field. He was an energetic scientist, who worked tirelessly and helped innumerable students along the way. He had certain flair, he could communicate with researchers to children with the same enthusiasm, and was always seen to put forth interesting facts, mesmerising people from diverse subjects. During 2015, he and his team successfully organised the prestigious 3rd Conference of Asian Society of Arachnology in Amravati, Maharashtra. He was full of life and worked till his last breath.

With the demise of Prof. Vankhede, India has lost a hard taskmaster and Scientist of repute and will be remembered as a man who revived the interest of Indians in Arachnida. Professor Dr. Vankhede's personality would continue to inspire researchers, arachnologists and young generation for decades to come. Prof. Dr. Vankhede is survived by his wife, 2 sons and 2 daughter-in-laws. May the Lord Almighty give the entire family and friends the strength and courage to bear this irreparable loss.

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